



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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Date: March 8, 2005

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Release Number TX 145.05

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF \$14.3 MILLION IN GRANTS

TEMPLE, Texas, March 8, 2005 — Bryan Daniel, USDA Rural Development State Director, announced today USDA Rural Development is accepting applications for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program. Funding in the amount of \$14.3 million is available to develop value-added agriculture business ventures and develop alternative sources of renewable energy which support President Bush's energy plan to develop alternative sources of renewable energy.

The Value-Added Producer Grant Program provides competitive grant funds for one of the two following activities: (1) to support the planning activities needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product or (2) to acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets.

"This grant will help agricultural producers become more profitable through value-added agricultural business opportunities," said Daniel. "In addition, priority consideration will be given to those grant applications that have at least 51% of project costs dedicated to activities for a bio-energy project."

Grants are available to independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures. Eligible applicants applying under the renewable energy category must include energy projects generated through the use of agricultural commodities, wind, water or solar power. The maximum award for the planning grant is \$100,000 and the maximum award for the working capital grant is \$150,000. Applications must be completed and submitted no later than May 6, 2005. For more information on the Value-Added Producer Grant, please contact Billy Curb, Business and Cooperative Specialist, (254) 742-9775 or visit the website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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